

City of Cambridge Recycling Advisory Committee

October 12, 2006 Meeting – Minutes taken by Rob Gogan

Members Present: Rob Gogan, Harvard University; Adam Mitchell, Save That Stuff; Doane Perry, Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association; Paul Schlaver, Cambridge Consumer Council; Shaunna Schiller, FCR-Boston

Guests Present: Kelly Dunn, Recycling Program Manager; Takeo Fuji, Tufts student; Elizabeth Gruber, Tufts student; Randi Mail, Recycling Director; John Bolduc, Community Development

Trash & Recycling Numbers

Randi announced that the DPW is developing an on-line data management system with www.re-trac.com, a Canada-based waste data tracking company. MassDEP asked Cambridge to try the system and give feedback to determine whether to use it for statewide municipal reporting requirements. Currently, Cambridge solid waste data is compiled in many spreadsheets and is not easily accessible or straightforward.

Re-Trac will enable DPW to compare solid waste data by collection day or truck route, and create standardized and customized reports to allow for trend analysis. There will also be a school component, so that Kelly can easily report performance data to the schools including environmental benefits.

Rob said that in terms of releasing information to the public, it's important to report an easy, consistent number, like the recycling rate or pounds of trash/recycling per capita. This makes it simple for people to track and remember, like the Dow Jones Industrial Average.

Randi expects the full launch of this system in January and is excited about this new resource. The annual cost is a penny per capita and since it is the first trial in MA, the first year will be at half the cost. This is a great value considering staff time spent on statistics, the new standardized report function and increased access to this data.

Randi reported that in 2006 paper tonnage has risen compared to 2007, but is down for the quarter (July-Sept). Paper recycled at the schools increased by 25% during the

[Recyclemania contest](#) held January-April. In the 2004 DEP Data that lists 100 largest MA cities by pounds disposed/day/person, Cambridge was 8th, with only 1.59 pounds of trash per day. Paul and Rob concurred that this is positive information to promote, especially when we may get overwhelmed when seeing a lot of trash at the curb throughout the week.

Rob stressed that any data system needs to be responsive to new technologies like pyrolysis and re-use, greater transportation efficiency, and market changes to keep the focus on waste generation and reduction.

Update on Climate Protection Plan

John Bolduc from the Community Development Department's Environment & Transportation Division updated the RAC about the [City's actions](#) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) and to promote such efforts in the community.

Here are some highlights:

- Cambridge GHG Inventory shows continued emissions increases across the community and looks at all CO₂ generating activities.
- Though only 1% of all sources of GHG, solid waste is a bright spot: emissions from solid waste declined 35% between 1990 to 2003 due to recycling.
- Transportation is 12% of total GHG emissions. Trouble spot is businesses and institutions, with rapid expansion of electric consumption.
- Waste is accounted for by calculating methane emissions from tons disposed in landfills and CO₂ emissions from tons disposed in incinerators is

- Compared to 1990, 8300 tons GHG reduction due to recycling.

The Committee discussed the need for solid waste professionals to educate people about the upstream GHG produced in the products they buy. John indicated that the [ICLEI](#) inventory numbers don't take that into account if they aren't Cambridge-made goods, but ideally it is reflected for those host cities' GHG inventories.

The City is nearly complete with an energy use tracking system so that consumption information for each city building can be accessed.

John then spoke about the new [Cambridge Climate Leader program](#) aimed at recruiting the Top 25 employers and other Cambridge businesses to make extraordinary green efforts in energy, waste and transportation. CDD staff developed this program with DPW. This is a voluntary program modeled after the MassDEP's old MRIP program (Municipal Recycling Incentive Program). MRIP listed different action areas and participating communities had to select a minimum number of actions in addition to meeting basic requirements. The city has adopted this menu approach.

Climate leaders will receive free technical assistance, static cling decals for their storefronts, and public recognition including on the City's website and at the GoGreen awards event. When a sufficient number of partners have joined, the City will encourage peer-to-peer exchanges to foster further action.

Program participants include Genzyme, Pfizer, Camp Dresser McKee, Shire Human Genetic Therapies, Abt Associates, Cambridge Innovation Center, Trinity Property Management, The Inn @ Harvard and Whole Foods (Prospect St). Interested business should contact John Bolduc about joining, 617-349-4628 or jbalduc@cambridgema.gov.

Other random energy/climate tidbits:

- In June, the Council passed a [resolution](#) that 20% of municipally-used electricity must come from renewable sources by 2010.
- CDD received a grant from the Center for a New American Dream to assess renewable energy options.
- CDD investigating direct installations of in solar or wind energy in the City.
- 2nd Annual Home Energy Fair, will be in February to be held at the high school.
- City Manager is investigating greening the fleet and stated strong interest in energy efficiency citywide in the recent budget cycle/goals. Randi said that through an EPA grant, DPW has been installing diesel oxidation catalysts in their trucks. Currently, the City is not purchasing biodiesel due to unfavorable pricing.

Market Report

Shaunna distributed the yellow sheet. Phase 2 of FCR's Auburn Single Stream Recycling System should be complete by December 1, 2006. To date, there have been no marketing problems with materials coming from single stream loads.

So far no MA municipalities are signed up with [RecycleBank](#), however Boston is considering participation, as well as Everett, Lexington, Somerville. First MA municipality to sign up will get a free retrofit for collection vehicles.

Shauna said that DPW contacts in PA and NJ RecycleBank communities have very favorable things to say about Recyclebank people and their problem solving abilities.

Randi shared a copy of a new brochure promoting the [CREATE](#) program (Cambridge Recycling Education Assistance for Teachers and Educators).

Meeting adjourned at 9:30.